

The hero behind the mask

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Summary: 012 was once just another mindless Combine soldier, now he has the four things that make a hero: Bravery, a longing for freedom, strength, and a ridiculously large amount of luck. I do not own any of the Half life characters or themes.

1. Chapter 1

"Please, I beg you, I'll do anything," the woman whimpered.

It was just like all of the others, the screams, the feeble attempt to resist and the plea for mercy, it was always the same, and it always ended the same, with a gunshot.

012 knew this, he had been doing it for weeks now, breaking into homes and killing the rebels, it had always been this way, and it always would be, or so he thought.

012 was your average Combine soldier, he followed his orders and never thought about what he was doing, all he knew was that the rebels wanted to overthrow the Combine and they had to be eliminated. But this was different somehow.

In the woman's arms there was a small vortigaunt, no taller than 012s arm, it was surprisingly calm, instead of crying or trying to hide it just stared, not at 012s captain, who had an SMG at the woman's head, but at 012. The creatures' one eye seemed to look through 012s armor, looking right into what was left of his soul and sending a shiver down his spine.

012s captain checked his SMG, preparing to reduce the defenseless woman to a bloody pulp as 012s two squad mates went back outside to check for people who might have escaped.

Something deep inside 012 stirred, sending an amazing warmth through his body, chasing away the numbing void that had taken root in his mind. 012 would probably never know what had caused it, the vorigaunt

or the woman's pleas for mercy, but at that very moment, something inside the once heartless murderer snapped back into place.

012 slowly raised his pistol, checking the clip; he would only have one chance at this.

The click of 012's pistol made the captain wheeled around, "012, what are you?" he began.

A lone gunshot rang out, cutting the captain off.

The woman stared at 012, a mixture of fear, confusion and gratitude written across her face.

012 whirled around, his military implants serving him well as he fired another two shots, killing the other two Combine soldiers as they reentered the house to investigate.

012 turned to face the woman, "get out of here," he said quickly, wishing that his electronic voice wasn't so intimidating.

Just then, two more figures appeared at the top of the stairs, a human and a vortigaunt. The human raised his revolver at 012, obviously taking him for an enemy when the sound of a shotgun being racked rang out behind 012.

012 turned; behind him was the one thing he had forgotten about: the transport driver who had dropped them off here. He was aiming his shotgun at the man, obviously thinking that he had shot the other soldiers.

Time seemed to stop at that second as two men appeared in front of 012. One man had green eyes, a military haircut, and a stern, almost frightening face. He wore a full grey suit and a matching briefcase. The other man had bright blue eyes, a young, pale face and black hair that came down to his shoulders. He wore a black suit and carried a matching briefcase.

"You should not be doing this, Mr. Fauners," the first man said in a quiet yet intimidating voice. "You are only a pawn in this little game, you are not meant to have such, significance."

The other man smiled slightly, "Pawns can become many things if they survive long enough," he said to the first man, his voice strong and friendly. "He has not yet interacted with your subject, until then you cannot do a thing to him, you know the regulations."

"Yes, I know," the first man growled as he slowly faded away. "We will meet again Mr. Fauners," he promised. "We will meet again."

"I am sorry that you have to be introduced this way Mr. Fauners," the second man said, now addressing 012. "But I assure you that you will learn more in time." "But until then, welcome to the game," Then the man disappeared, and in the same moment, time unfroze.

Three things happened all at once at that moment, the driver fired, the man fired, and 012 jumped in front of the driver's blast.

When he hit the ground from the impact of the blast, 012 saw the driver fall. He heard voices and then the sound of footsteps, and

then, just before everything went black, he saw the woman bending over him and heard the hiss of his helmet being removed.

2. Chapter 2

012 woke up to the sight of the man he had seen rubbing alcohol on his wounds. "That armor of yours is pretty tough," the man said, trying to sound casual. "Without it, you probably would have been dead."

012 looked around him, he was no longer in the rebel house, but on an operation table in some form of lab, "Where am I?" he groaned, surprised at the sound of his own voice, which sounded old and weak.

"You are in Dr. Klieners lab," the man said, starting to bandage 012s pellet-hole-riddled chest.

A few seconds later a half bald man with glasses was looking over him.

"Hello my friend," the man said. "I am Dr Kliener, scientist and inventor; now then, what is your name?"

"012," 012 said. "At least, that's my unit number," he decided to keep the part about the two men secret; they would probably think he was insane if he did tell them.

"Yes, I should have expected as much," said Kliener, helping 012 into a sitting position. "I cannot say how glad I am to see that the Combine can be reverted back into their human state of mind, now if only we- oh, hello Gordon. A man in some form of orange armor walked into the room, the moment he and 012 saw each other they both drew out a weapon, Gordon taking out a crowbar and 012 grabbing the mans revolver from its holster. 012 knew this man; he had seen countless videos of him, Gordon Freeman, the bane of the Combine.

Luckily, Dr. Kliener moved between them before they could do anything, "Calm down Gordon," he said. "This fellow here has been converted; he no longer serves the Combine."

Gordon slowly lowered his crowbar, eyeing 012, who had given the man his revolver back.

"Now then," said Kliener, helping 012 off of the table. "We need toâ€¦" he never finished his sentence, at that moment a giant explosion shook the lab, making the hallway collapse and trapping the four of them in the lab.

"Oh my," Kliener said, walking over to a wall and pulling it away, revealing a door. "Gordon, you need to find Alyx, last I saw her she was helping Barney with another shipment of supply crates, Tod and I will meet you at the docks, 012, I need you to follow Gordon, he'll need all the help he can get," he then scurried down the tunnel with Tod behind him.

Gordon eyed 012, who nodded, "Right now we need to work together," the ex Combine said.

Gordon returned the nod and headed down the tunnel, which split in two a few feet down. Kliener had taken the left tunnel so they would have to take the left one, unfortunately the left tunnel happened to go right under the kitchen, and the vortigaunts had just caught a new load of headcrabsâ€

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file.